

Response Under 37 CFR 1.116
Expedited Procedure
Examining Group 3679
Application No. 10/582,809
Paper Dated: May 18, 2009
In Reply to USPTO Correspondence of February 20, 2009
Attorney Docket No. 0388-061722

REMARKS

I. Introduction

The final Office Action of February 20, 2009 has been reviewed and the Examiner's comments carefully considered. The present Amendment amends independent claim 1 in accordance with the originally-filed specification. No new matter has been added. Claims 1, 2, 4-8, and 10 are currently pending in this application, and claim 1 is in independent form. The Applicants respectfully request entry of the above amendment and favorable reconsideration of the claims.

II. Information Disclosure Statement

Initially, the Examiner did not consider the following references provided on Form PTO/SB/08a submitted in the Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) of December 4, 2008:

- A) Japanese Unexamined Utility Model Application Publication No. JP 56-155188 (Document No. 8)
- B) Japanese Unexamined Utility Model Application Publication No. JP 51-86821 U (Document No. 10)

The Examiner indicated that these references were not considered because a full copy of each of these references has not been provided. However, a full copy of each of these references was submitted with the IDS of December 4, 2008. A full copy of Japanese Unexamined Utility Model Application Publication No. JP 56-155188 is one page long, and a full copy of Japanese Unexamined Utility Model Application Publication No. JP 51-86821U is two pages long. Accordingly, a call was placed to the Examiner and it was explained that a full copy of each of the above references was submitted on December 4, 2008. The Examiner indicated that he would provide an indication that he has considered these references in the next office communication.

Accordingly, a clean copy of the Form PTO/SB/08a filed with the IDS of December 4, 2008, along with additional copies of Document Nos. 8 and 10, is submitted

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herewith. The Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner initial this new copy of the Form PTO/SB/08a indicating that Document Nos. 8 and 10 have been considered.

III. Allowable Subject Matter

The Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for indicating that claims 1, 2, 4-8, and 10 are directed to allowable subject matter. More specifically, the Examiner indicated that claims 1, 2, 4-8, and 10 would be allowable if rewritten or amended to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, discussed hereinafter.

IV. 35 U.S.C. §112, Second Paragraph Rejections

Claims 1, 2, 4-8, and 10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the Applicants regard as the invention. The Examiner contends that the phrase "the inner circumferential surface of the receiving opening of the receiving pipe section" at lines 12 and 13 of claim 1 lacks proper antecedent basis. The Applicants believe that the above amendment to independent claim 1 overcomes the Examiner's indefiniteness rejection. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection and allowance of pending claims 1, 2, 4-8, and 10 are respectfully requested.

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V. Conclusion

Based on the foregoing amendments and remarks, the Applicants respectfully request a) consideration of Document Nos. 8 and 10 submitted with the IDS of December 4, 2008, b) entry of the above amendment, and c) allowance of pending claims 1, 2, 4-8, and 10. Should the Examiner have any questions, or wish to discuss the application in further detail, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative by telephone at 412-471-8815.

Respectfully submitted,

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